

Newsletter from the Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
No.16: Welcome and Farewell

28 March 2024



Farewell Dinner for Ambassador Urawadee Sriphiromya (26 March 2024)

How did you spend your time in March? In Japan, it is the end of the fiscal year and the time for spring holidays. Many moved different positions and took leaves in our office. In Indonesia, Ramadan started which made the pace of life adjusted accordingly.

As for myself, the month of March has been filled with welcome and farewell. I hosted a farewell dinner for Ambassador Urawadee Sriphiromya, Permanent Representative of Thailand to ASEAN, who successfully led the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation to success as ASEAN's country coordinator for Japan since my arrival. And also for Ambassador Nguyen Hai Bang, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to ASEAN, who shared time with me at so many events.

I also welcomed H.E. Dato' Astanah Abdul Aziz, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Political Security Community, and H.E. Nararya S. Soeprapto, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs who recently started their new roles at the ASEAN Secretariat.

As we appreciate many encounters, we can develop and leap further building on the achievements we have made. In this edition of the Ambassador's Newsletter, I would like to report you on welcoming and farewell events as well as new developments and to explore with you a new direction of ASEAN-Japan cooperation.



Welcome Dinner for H.E. Nararya S. Soeprapto, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs (13 March 2024)

● Welcome and Farewell Dinners

On 26 March, I hosted a farewell dinner for Ambassador Urawadee of Thailand at my residence. It was a memorable occasion with Permanent Representatives of ASEAN Member States, Ambassadors of Dialogue Partners, and senior officials of ASEAN Secretariat in attendance.

Looking back, just after I arrived here, Ambassador Urawadee joined ["soba-making \(buckwheat noodles\)"](#) with me for Japanese food promotion event at the ASEAN Secretariat, making the event a great success. Since then, she has attended so many events and meetings for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, suggesting ideas and undertaking coordination. This all led to great achievements, such as the Joint Vision Statement and the Implementation Plan. Ambassador Bang of Viet Nam, also leaving his post, was unable to attend, but I am grateful to him for his advice and support over the past year.

I had the opportunity to invite H.E. Astanah, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Political Security Community, and we exchanged views to strengthen ASEAN-Japan cooperation in the future. I also invited H.E. Nararya, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs, and we discussed issues in progress such as ASEAN-Japan legal and judicial cooperation, ASEAN Secretariat's participation in the EXPO 2025 Osaka-Kansai, and Japan's support for the functions of the ASEAN Secretariat.



Jakarta Jakarta Japan School's Spo-GOMI Event (7 March 2024)

● Efforts of Junior High School Students to Address Garbage Problem Junior high-school students addressing waste issue

For the past year, Year-9 students at the Jakarta Japanese School (JJS) have studied ASEAN, Indonesia, and Japan relations as part of their integrated studies. Last year in April, I gave a [lecture](#) and assigned tasks. In September they submitted a [proposal and an action declaration](#) to me, and in October they organised exhibitions in four booths at [their school festival \(JJS Festival\)](#).

On 7 March, as their last activity before graduation, they participated in a SpoGOMI at the Ragunan Zoo in Jakarta. SpoGOMI is a new sport from Japan that adds the essence of "sport" to the traditional trash pickup organised by companies and organizations and switches the "social service" activity into a "competition. Last year, the [World Cup](#) for it was held for the first time.

About 40 Year-9 students of the JJS donated [handmade trash boxes](#) to representatives of the Ragunan Zoo at the opening ceremony, and then spent an

hour collecting and sorting garbage, working up a good sweat. They were supported by staff members of Marubeni Corporation and Aeon Delight, who have been making great efforts to promote SpoGOMI in Indonesia, such as Jakarta, Bali, and Bandung.

I believe the students of JJS will certainly be of great help in their efforts to strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and Japan, which they proposed and implemented on their own. I will continue to support them after their graduation.



Graduation Ceremony for the AHA Centre Executive Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management Programme (ACE-LEDMP) (22 March 2024)

● Exchange and Knowledge Sharing in the Field of Disaster Management

On 22 March, the Graduation Ceremony for the AHA Centre Executive Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management Programme (ACE-LEDMP) [Middle Level Course](#) was held. 20 participants from National Disaster Management Organizations (NDMOs) across ASEAN attended 1-month online training and another 1-month of face-to-face training in Jakarta and Japan.

At the ceremony, Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN H.E. Nararya and Director of AHA Center Mr. Lee gave their remarks and I also made my [remarks](#). A [recap video](#) of all the trainees' messages was played, followed by awarding the certificates of completion. After closing, I asked the trainees about their impressions of the program. They replied that in Japan they visited Tokyo, Saitama and Kobe, exchanged views with disaster management officials both from both public and private sectors, and observed sites of various facilities, for which they expressed their sincere appreciation.

A large earthquake occurred in Ishikawa, Japan, in January this year. I am pleased to know that Japan's expertise in disaster management are widely utilized in ASEAN countries. I feel that this is a great contribution to the region and to the world.

This training program began in 2014, and about 150 people have already participated in the course, while the content continues to be improved. I would like to make every effort to ensure this kind of initiative continues and develops in the future.



Reception for the establishment of the E-DISC's Exclusive Membership Programme (26 March 2024)

● ASEAN Startup Ecosystem

On 26 March, I attended the reception for the establishment of the [E-DISC \(ERIA - Digital Innovation and Sustainable Economy Center\)'s Exclusive Membership Programme](#) and made remarks at the outset. E-DISC was launched last year by ERIA in cooperation with Japan.

E-DISC has been working, since its inception in August last year, to create a startup ecosystem to address social challenges in ASEAN. The reception gathered key partners to expand the network of the E-DISC membership

programme. Greetings and presentations were made by President Watanabe Tetsuya of ERIA, Executive Director Ferro Ferizka of [Pijar Foundation](#), Mr Ikenishi Ryo of [Japan SEA Innovation Platform \(JSIP\)](#), and Mr Ishikawa Hiroshi of JETRO Singapore Office. The event was an opportunity for startup and innovative stakeholders from Indonesia, Japan, and other countries from the industry, government, and academia to interact with each other.

ERIA also has a [Call for Proposals: One ASEAN Startup Award 2024](#) to be held three times this year, and the award ceremony scheduled to be held in Laos this October. Through these initiatives, I hope the ASEAN startup ecosystem will grow and develop significantly.



EAS Ambassador Meeting (26 March 2024)

● Launch of the East Asia Summit (EAS) Group Start of East Asia Summit (EAS) Process

On 26 March, the First Meeting of the Group of East Asia Summit (EAS) Participating Countries' Ambassadors to ASEAN in Jakarta (EAS Group) was held for this year. The EAS is a framework for regional cooperation involving eight countries: Japan, China, Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, India, the United States, and Russia, in addition to 10 ASEAN Member States.

This year, Lao PDR holds the ASEAN Chair, and the preparations for the EAS Summit in Vientiane in October began this time. The meeting also included the promotion of cooperation under the EAS Plan of Action 2024-2028 adopted last year and also covered regional policies and initiatives.

At the EAS Summit held in Jakarta last September, support for mainstreaming and implementing the ASEAN Outlook for the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) was confirmed for the first time in the [Leaders' Statement](#) (Para. 33). I would like to make efforts to materialise this, making use of various initiatives launched throughout the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.



Farewell luncheon (March 7, 2024)

● Creating a New Era, Building On the Achievements

There was also a personnel change at our office this month. Ms. TSUNEZUKA Itsumi, Special staff, was in charge of all major PR events throughout the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, such as the [ASEAN-Japan Fair](#) and the [Golden Friendship Walk & Run](#). As she was to leave this month, we held a farewell luncheon. She felt touched to receive the gifts and messages from colleagues. She gave us great memories for this memorable year.

I believe that new development can take place building on the outcomes

achieved, only if we cherish various relationships established throughout last year's 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and pass them on to the next generation. I will remember what I felt at this month's welcome and farewell events, and together with the newcomers, I would like to build a new era of ASEAN-Japan cooperation.

Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN
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